Can You Say Libertarian?

The writer of the article "Paving the Digital Highway" in the December 1993 issue exhibits signs of the deformation resulting from residence in journalism schools where the left leg grows less than the right leg, resulting in a significant list to port.
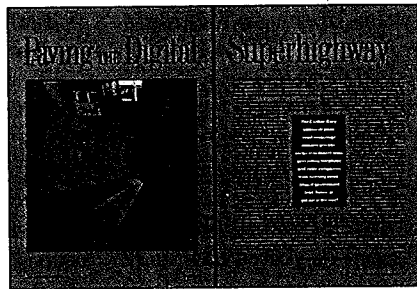
The author states: "Imagine the ultimate consumer nightmare: the local phone company and cable monopolies rolled into one." Imagine an ultimate consumer nightmare: a national communications network developed and controlled by the federal government. The article also states that the feds will never develop the system because they haven't the money. When has the government ever backed away from any program because of a concern for cost? Has the author heard about the socialized medicine plan? Talk about ultimate consumer nightmares!

Further in the article it is stated that only the railroad robber barons benefited from building the railroads until, presumably, the government brought the benefits of railroads to the rest of us. The rapacity of the government in its assault on private enterprise makes the railroad magnates look like Boy Scouts.

It is still highly debatable whether the public wants an interactive glass fiber communication system for purposes other than data and information transfer. Whatever the drawbacks to a private communication system may be, and whatever the costs of for-profit operation, the concept of a bungling federal bureaucracy in control of the most important technology of the first decades of the next century would be laughable were it not so frighteningly possible.

Henry E. Burwash
Los Alamitos, CA

Internet Pioneer

Your December issue on the Internet accurately portrayed many important aspects of Internet usage, and I think many new readers will be won by your continued focus on businesses setting up shop in cyberspace. There is, however, one important consideration when dealing with the Internet, and that is the Internet culture. Your credibility will be enhanced by your awareness of the early pioneers of the Internet.

One such pioneer is Brewster Kahle. He created the consortium of companies (Thinking Machines Corp., Apple Computer Inc., Dow Jones, and KPMG Peat Marwick) that developed the WAIS standard. And he is also the founder and president of WAIS Inc., not I.

John Duhring
VP, WAIS Inc.
Menlo Park, Calif.

The Internet Umbrella

Regarding the December 1993 issue on the Internet, you might note one teensy but significant correction. The Internet Society is not "a trade group of Internet providers." Rather, it is the global international organization for internetworking and the Internet that serves as a worldwide umbrella for all the necessary standards-making, administrative, coordination, and external-relations activities. These are operations that allow the technologies, networks, applications, and users to function, evolve, and scale. While Internet providers are a major set of constituents in the Internet Society, there are many others.

Congratulations on a collectable issue!

Anthony Rutkowski
VP, Internet Society
Reston, Va.

Internet Security

I really liked your overview of what's needed to be more secure when interfacing with the Internet. Can you give me any info on how to contact EINet?

The National Institute of Standards and Technology has been putting some good TCP/IP security papers on their bulletin board system. They're also a good source of CERT/CIAC bulletins for people who don't have electronic mail access to the outside world but have PCs and modems.

Ken Cutler
Glendale, Ariz.

Technical Editor Rik Farrow responds: The EINet people can be accessed via the MCC consortium in Austin, Texas. Contact Chris Hamilton, manager of business development, at 512-338-3415, or by e-mail at hamilton@mcc.com.

Sniffing Around for Something Different

In your article about Objectcenter 2.0.2, "Put Your Objects Front and Center" in the November 1993 issue, you said that "you would be hard-pressed to find a product that offers all of the ease of use, debugging capabilities, and expandability that Objectcenter does."

I've found one: It's the Sniff+ C++ development environment. Originally, our cooperation partner Siemens wanted me use Objectcenter 2.0.2 for developing software based on the ET++ class library. With Objectcenter it was tough and tricky to get an application running, not to speak of the time-consuming incremental changes on a SPARCstation 2. With Sniff+ I had no problems working with such a large class library as ET++.

Wolfgang Pree
Linz, Austria

Why Intel?

While Allen Taylor's article, "Pentium Servers: Should You Take the Leap?" in the November issue, was very insightful and unbiased, I believe that it lends too much validity to the use of Pentium-based Unix machines in compute-intensive mission-critical situations. The customer is still faced with a proliferation of differently implemented Pentium boxes with totally different I/O and performance capabilities. Pentium does not give us any performance or price benefits over the current RISC generation of machines. Why should we want to move over to Intel's proprietary chip?

Michael Ramchand
Port of Spain, Trinidad,
West Indies